
IRAQI DESTINY

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Spc. Joshua M. Risner

Soldiers prepare to enter a room, not knowing what might lie in wait for them on the other side.

Weapon search continues

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

Because of the end of the weapons amnesty period, soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) searched houses in a Mosul neighborhood June 18 to search for illegal weapons.

“Our main objective for these types of missions is to look for weapons and people on the most wanted list,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Garcia, Company B, 3rd Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt.

The mission was a battalion sized operation with several companies working in coordination with each other, according to Capt. Eric Schuller, commander, Co. B, 3rd Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt.

“We’re going after multiple targets in the same neighborhood to try to make the mission more effective,” he said.

The coalition forces were assisted by local police on the mission. “One of the main reasons they are working with us is if there are weapons in a mosque, they can go in while we can’t,” Schuller said.

The soldiers went house to house, door to door in their search. Instead of knocking down doors and entering by force,

they knocked on doors and explained why they were there. Then they would enter and search the premises in an orderly, but thorough manner. Two of the houses searched by Co. A yielded an AK-47 a piece.

These weapons were held by the soldiers until the search was complete.

After finding no other weapons, the soldiers gave the people back their AKs in accordance with the weapons policy.

The policy states the each household can have one weapon, up to 7.62mm, for personal security as long as the weapon doesn’t leave the premises of their establishment.



Spc. Joshua M. Risner

Soldiers are entertained by the Eagle Flight show band, an ensemble comprising members of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Band.

'Screaming Eagles'

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

In Mosul or other regions of Iraq occupied by coalition troops, entertainment can be a hot commodity or a rarity that is hard to come by.

The Eagle Flight show band, an ensemble comprising members of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) band, is providing entertainment to troops by performing popular music at different unit areas.

"We have played in several places around the area of operations," said Sgt. Jeremy Middleton, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) band. "We're providing morale and esprit de corps during deployment."

The show band plays top 40 hits encompassing the last 40

years. They perform on request for different units, and more requests come in every day, according to Middleton.

At the beginning of the deployment the band's mission had nothing to do with music. "We were basically security forces for the Division Main," Middleton said. He added that now the war is over and coalition forces have gone to a peacekeeping mission, they have pulled the instruments out of their cases and began to concentrate on music once again.

"When we first got to Mosul we became much more focused on our musical mission," Middleton said. "We went through a build up phase, practicing about two to four hours a day to build up our chops and familiarize ourselves with the material."

Middleton added that the band still has a minor security role to play, but their mission is mainly entertaining the troops.

Middleton says that the troops are really receptive to the performances. "When you do this job and you see how they react when they hear something they haven't heard in awhile, it makes it all worthwhile," he said. "We're just out here to give people a good time."

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Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus

Eagle 6 sends:

To the Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault):

The Division continues to do a superb job in Northern Iraq. Indeed, you can all be very proud of what you've done since going through (or over) the berm from Kuwait.

It is clear that we're going to be in Iraq for at least a few more months – but I don't know how long. I would love to be able to give each of you the date when you'll get back home; however, that is not

We've fought hard, as well, to get hot dogs and hamburgers on a regular basis, but have struck out so far, as no vendor, again, passes the health test. We'll continue working this one and the Division Support Command commander will have this in his rucksack until it's solved.

I have also approved a contract for an internet service site for each battalion, and we've built an MWR center, established a PX (from which the brigades draw items to establish satellite PXs), and begun construction of more permanent base camp facilities at Mosul Airfield, one of our largest fixed bases. We have pushed the postal system repeatedly, and I believe mail is now working reasonably well given the 1200-kilometer route the mail has to travel from Kuwait (or the 400-km distance from Baghdad International Airport, if it lands there). In fact, one soldier I talked to today actually received a letter 7 days after it was mailed in the States. In general, though, mail is taking from 10-21 days to arrive, and while that's a long time, it's reasonable given the circumstances.

I recently approved purchase of an Operation Iraqi Freedom coin for every soldier who fought with us. We hope to get these in a month or two and to give them to every trooper. We will also have produced an OIF poster for distribution to each of you at Fort Campbell on your return. The prototype has already been completed and it is quite nice. We are trying to be reasonable in interpreting the standard for approving emergency leave; however, we still must carry on with the mission and there is clearly a line we have to draw with respect to that to ensure our units remain at sufficient strength to perform the tasks they've got. We have been identifying local swimming pools for renovation and, once renovated, we're coordinating for arrangements for our soldiers to swim in them. We've also encouraged unit intramural sports activities and we have released MWR funds for organization/banner days.

The Division CSM and I looked briefly at wearing patrol caps and removing body armor while on missions; unfortunately, enemy activity picked up right after we began considering this. We'll have to get things back under control before pursuing it further.

We're getting 30 AT&T cell phones on 25 June and we'll distribute them to units. They won't be free, but the price will be reasonable, and soldiers can make calls on them using a credit card, AT&T calling card, or pre-paid calling card (on sale at the PX). We're also working the possibility of morale VTC sessions with families at Fort Campbell, and I'll let you know how that works. We are working hard to ensure that every soldier has a cot, and we're locally purchasing mattress pads and pillows as well.

We are working individual and unit awards hard to ensure proper recognition of all. This may not mean much now, but it will some years hence as you look back on what you did to help liberate Iraq and give its people the most precious gift known to man – freedom.

Finally, we have challenged unit commanders and CSMs at all levels to be creative and innovative and aggressive in taking care of you, our most precious asset and most lethal weapon.

Thanks for all that you do. I feel very honored to wear the Screaming Eagle patch with each and every one of you.

Air Assault!

DAVID H. PETRAEUS
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

possible as no rotation date has yet been set. I will share information on redeployment as soon as we get it.

This is not an easy mission. We're still getting shot at periodically, the summer heat is becoming crushing, and tasks we have to perform are often tedious.

It's clear that we're going to have to hang tough, take things one day at a time, give energy to our buddies, keep our heads down, and drive on. Remember, if it were easy, they wouldn't need the Screaming Eagles. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to make life for you as livable as is possible in a country where the temperature hits 115 degrees in the noon-day sun and where water, electrical power and other necessities are often not available or are not reliable.

We're working hard to improve your quality of life. I pushed hard, for example, to develop a Fighter Management Pass Program (R&R) at a secure hotel in the Kurdish area. The Division CSM sorted it out, and we started it Wednesday. We'll send 140 soldiers there twice a week. For \$70, a soldier gets three days/two nights at a very nice hotel with a swimming pool, TV, air conditioning, internet, movies, shopping excursions (secured by Peshmerga), etc. It's a good deal, and we should be able to get everyone in the Division through there in about two months time. We have also encouraged brigades to develop programs that pull a platoon off the line periodically for a 24-36-hour break as mission permits.

That has not always been easy given the recent challenges in our area of operations, but your units are working it.

We've been working hard to get all the environmental control units (ECUs), swamp coolers, air conditioners, etc. that we can get our hands on to cool tents, buildings, and work places. We've got a long way to go in this regard, especially given the lack of electricity in some areas, but we're pressing on. We've also requested air conditioned tents like those in Kuwait, but it will take some time for them to make their way to us, if they're even available, so we need to pursue the ECU/swamp cooler options as aggressively as possible – and we will. In fact, many units have already done great work in this regard. We've also been providing money to units to buy refrigerators and freezers to ensure cold water, and we're trying to get a contract with an ice company that gets the health folks' stamp of approval. That has not been easy so far, but, again, we'll keep pushing. We've fought hard to get you Gatorade, both in bottles and in powdered form. And distribution of that just began in the past couple of days.

Fighter Management Pass Program provides vacation for deployed soldiers

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) can now enjoy three days and two nights of rest and relaxation at the Jiyan Hotel in the northern town of Dohuk.

The Fighter Management Pass Program at the hotel is a pilot venture to give soldiers in the division an opportunity to take a break from their jobs and co-workers, said Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin L. Hill, division command sergeant major.

Every three days 140 soldiers from units all over the division will be bused to the hotel to enjoy swimming, playing pool, going shopping, using the internet and eating food other than MREs and T-Rations.

The amount of soldiers that a unit can send is proportional to the unit's strength in the division's total force.

"If a unit's strength is 15 percent of our total force then they get 15 percent of the slots," Hill said. "It's the same every week so the units can't ask 'how many slots did I get this time?'"

While the number of slots is immutable, which soldiers get sent is entirely dependent on each unit's chain of command. Leaders can send whomever they want on the program.

"The biggest thing is that I don't want units to use this as a reward system. I want them to use it as a tool so they can identify the soldier who needs a break," Hill said.

Hill equates it to recharging the troops internal batteries and getting the soldiers focused to do their best during the rest of the deployment.

"We're going to be here for a while. We want to recharge your batteries. This will definitely move that needle from red to green. (Soldiers will) be able to kick in and prepare for that marathon," he said, comparing the deployment to a race.

"In a sprinting race, a runner can see the finish line, or knows where it is. This allows the runner to give it his all and not hold anything back," Hill said. "In a marathon the runner knows that the race will end eventually, but can't see the end, so they have to take advantage of all the breaks available until they get their second wind. The FMPP is one of those breaks."

Spc. Troy Wooten, heavy equipment operator, 887th Engineer Company, 326th



Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

A soldier from the 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault) in the Fighter Management Pass Program, does a front flip into the pool at the Jiyan Hotel. The FMPP allows soldiers to rest for three days.

Engineer Battalion, was one of the soldiers chosen to participate in the first group to go through the FMPP. He feels that he deserves the time off because he "spent a long time in the desert," he said.

While at the Jiyan Hotel, Wooten hopes to "relax for a little while and see the town," he said.

"I think everybody deserves some time off, we've been working non-stop since March," said Pfc. Nathan Boies, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, another soldier in the program.

Soldiers have a few rules they have to follow once they arrive in Dohuk. They don't bring their weapons, but they do have to bring their promasks and J-Lists. They are only allowed to wear civilian swimwear, on the way to and from the hotel pool.

General order number one is still in effect which means that soldiers aren't allowed to drink alcohol. Also, when dealing with Iraqis they should always "treat them with dignity and respect," Hill said.

There will be leaders at the hotel with the soldiers, but "they're not here to babysit, they're here to step in when required," Hill said.

There will be no second chances if soldiers do something wrong, and the consequences will be severe, Hill informed the troops during their incoming briefing.

"You make one mistake and we'll put

you in a vehicle and send you back to your unit," he said.

Many soldiers are happy for any opportunity to take a break from their jobs.

"I've been looking forward to coming," Wooten said. "This looks like it'll be controlled fun."

The FMPP costs soldiers \$70 each. Besides the activities offered, the money gives soldiers access to a free buffet for each meal and a bedroom with two twin-size beds and a small television with cable.

"(The rooms) are pretty nice," said Pfc. Christopher Kuehlem, 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. Rgt. "It's a lot better than what we've been sleeping on."

The five-star Jiyan Hotel was one of many potential sites proposed for the FMPP.

"The big things we were looking for were, one: a safe and secure area, two: throughput, the amount of soldiers we could put through in a week, and also amenities," Hill said.

By renting out the first three floors of the hotel, almost 70 rooms, the division has ensured that 280 soldiers will participate in the program in a week.

Contributed by
Spc. Joshua Hutcheson
101st Abn. Div. (AAslt.) PAO

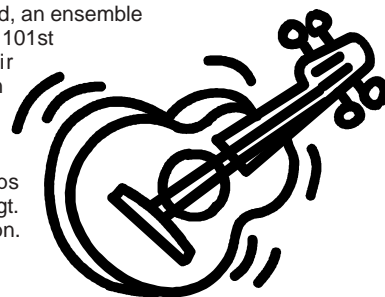


Spc. Joshua M. Risner



House band provides 'good times' for 2nd Brigade troops

The Eagle Flight show band, an ensemble comprising members of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Band, entertain soldiers at the 2nd brigade tactical operations center in Mosul. "We're providing morale and esprit de corps during deployment," said Sgt. Jeremy Middleton, 101st Abn. Div. (AAst.) band.



Man on the Street

Why do you feel the citizens of Mosul aren't turning in their weapons to the local authorities by will?



"Before, Iraqi citizens were allowed to have weapons for protection. That is why they probably keep them."

- Ahmed Khalil



"Many people don't turn the weapons in because they need to keep them at home to protect their belongings and family from thieves and criminals."

- Haza Azhan-Khalil

"It is bad conditions and not a normal situation. The weapons don't profit us, they should be turned in."

- Unidentified Iraqi citizen



"They need to turn them in to preserve the safety of our city. I don't know why they don't turn them in, I'm not related with them."

- Mohammed Saiid



"Probably because of security. To protect themselves. It is a bad situation now, and people are not secure yet with the police."

- Ali Hashem



"They want to protect themselves and their shops."

- Faith Faiz Fathalla